COLLEGE READINESS PROGRAM

Request for Applications

Fiscal Year 2000-2001

California Department of Education
830 S Street
Sacramento, CA 95814

December 2000

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

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I. PURPOSE AND KEY ACTIVITIES

The California Department of Education is pleased to announce the College Readiness Program (CRP) grant initiative focusing on a commitment to standards-based education in mathematics in the middle grades. The purpose of this Request for Applications (RFA) is to notify school districts and county offices of education of the availability of funds to establish a CRP grant initiative in eligible sixth, seventh, and eighth grade schools.

The goals of the CRP are (1) to significantly increase the enrollment in grade eight Algebra I, as described in the *Mathematics Framework for California Public Schools Kindergarten through Grade Twelve*, ch. 3 p. 158, and (2) to provide quality and effective teaching strategies to ensure mastery of the Algebra I standards leading to successful completion of the Algebra I course. The CRP funds will provide (1) teacher professional development in mathematics content and pedagogy, (2) the ongoing support of a mathematics coach both inside and outside of the classroom, and (3) additional teacher time for discussion centered around student achievement and assessment.

Research indicates that algebra is one of the "gatekeeper" courses (Pelavin-Kane, *Changing the Odds*, 1990). The CRP work focuses on student achievement at individual schools while working in concert with two to four other cluster schools. Each CRP eligible cluster is comprised of three to five middle schools which all meet the CRP eligibility criteria. The central work of schools in the project includes gathering and analyzing individual school data related to student achievement in mathematics courses, developing and providing effective systemic professional development programs, and strengthening the mathematical content knowledge of teachers. Effectiveness of the individual site programs will be measured by the percentage growth of all students successfully completing all mathematics courses including Algebra I.

All eligible CRP clusters submitting applications must:

- Be committed to the CRP goal of significantly increasing the number of students who successfully master the standards of Algebra I as defined in the *Mathematics Framework for California Public School Kindergarten through Grade Twelve*, p. 158.
- Work individually as well as in the cluster of middle schools
- Ensure the participation of all teachers of mathematics for all cluster sites
- Provide a mathematics coach/facilitator for the cluster
- Actively participate in the CRP for a minimum of four years
- Partner with a local California State University (CSU)

All participating schools in each cluster must ensure a coherent and cohesive educational mathematics experience for students by:

- Reviewing and analyzing individual mathematics student achievement data to drive the day-to-day activities and decisions of the CRP.
- Developing and implementing a first year plan with both short and long term measurable benchmarks for achieving the four year vision of increasing student enrollment and achievement in the eighth grade Algebra I course.
- Supporting and providing a long-term professional development program for participating teachers of mathematics and site administrators.
- Reviewing and augmenting current pre-algebra and algebra curriculum.
- Revising current instructional strategies and instructional materials to implement the revised curricula.
- Reevaluating and adjusting the program based upon individual student mathematics achievement and school-wide SAT9 data and enrollment figures on an annual basis.

Each CRP cluster must select a mathematics coach whose primary responsibility is the CRP school cluster and the implementation of the CRP plan. Mathematics coaches are to assist individual school cluster teachers of mathematics for grades six, seven, and eight in vertical teams.

On a day-to-day basis, mathematics coaches, in collaboration with their CSU partner, will do, but are not limited to, the following:

- provide and broker professional development opportunities
- provide for hands-on learning experiences
- provide classroom observations and coaching
- provide demonstration lessons
- explore expanded options for teaching and learning

The math coach will be the key professional for the individual cluster schools as well as the cluster CRP efforts.

This RFA contains the information needed to apply for a College Readiness Program grant. All eligible schools, school districts, and county offices of education are encouraged to become familiar with the RFA and have a clear understanding of the requirements prior to developing and submitting an application.

II. BACKGROUND

The intent of the CRP, since its inception in the 1980s, is to provide additional support and academic services to middle grade students in order to increase access to California's colleges and universities. In past years, mini-grants were offered to large numbers of middle schools. Each school chose its own focus. The grants offered through this RFA represent a new direction for the CRP.

Standards-based education and accountability are the new challenges for California's schools. We believe that standards-based education – defining explicit content and performance standards for every classroom – will lead to significantly increased academic achievement for all students. Further, research indicates that content and performance standards can be powerful tools for reinvigorating students' commitment to academic achievement. The challenge for the schools

and teachers of mathematics is to prepare all children to study Algebra I by the eighth grade, as indicated in the mathematics standards (*Mathematics Framework for California Public Schools*

Grades Kindergarten through Twelve, 1999, ch.3 p. 2). The new CRP focuses on this very key set of standards for California's students – successful preparation for and completion of Algebra I in grade eight. Algebra has long been known as the "gatekeeper" to college preparation work and to entering colleges and universities. Research also shows that students who do not pass algebra are less likely to enter a four-year college or to graduate with their peers.

III. ELIGIBILITY, FUNDING, AND REPORTING

The CRP will support clusters of three to five schools with sixth, seventh, and eighth grade students in partnerships with their respective school districts and/or county offices of education. Approximately twenty to twenty-five middle schools or four to eight clusters will be funded statewide. Each school in a CRP cluster must meet the CRP criteria as defined below. More than one LEA may participate in an individual CRP cluster**.**

Eligibility Criteria: *Eligible schools are those who meet both of the stated criteria below:*

- *Criteria 1:* Schools who tested less then 30 percent of their total eighth grade students on the Stanford Achievement Test 9 (SAT9) Algebra I test at the end of the 1999-2000 school year. To determine the percent tested for each school, please refer to the CDE website at http://star.cde.ca.gov/star2000d/indexes/all_district_index.html

- *Criteria 2:* Schools with less than 50 percent of their students scoring at or above the 50 percentile on the SAT9 Mathematics test (National Percentile Rank—NPR).

Charter Schools Eligibility

Eligible: Charter schools that are not participating under the block grant funding model may apply for the College Readiness Program.

Not eligible: Charter schools that operate under the block grant funding model are not eligible to apply for the College Readiness Program.

Please see Appendix B for the list of CRP Eligible Schools.

Funding:

School districts or county offices of education may apply for funding of a cluster. However, a lead LEA must be established for the CRP. The lead LEA is directly responsible for collecting and submitting all documentation and evaluations for the CRP cluster to the California Department of Education. The lead LEA is also fiscally responsible for the CRP cluster.

The CRP grant period is anticipated to be four years. Funding for years subsequent to year 1 will be contingent on future budget allocations. The Budget Act for 2000-2001 appropriates $822,000 for CRP. Grant awards are for up to $40,000 for each school in a cluster. It is anticipated that this year's grant awards will support 20-25 schools. Continued funding of the individual CRP clusters will be dependent on each cluster making significant progress in Algebra I enrollment and submitting all required program and fiscal reports.

Once your submitted application has been reviewed and approved and all required forms (Certification of Acceptance of Grant Conditions and Drug-Free Workplace Certification) are

submitted, 75% of the grant funds will be advanced to the lead LEA. The final 25% of the grant funds will be dispersed after the required final expenditure and program reports have been submitted to the CDE at the end of the grant period. The grant period will be from March 1, 2001 to February 28, 2002. (See V. Application Timeline)

Reporting:

Applicants must also agree to participate in an evaluation to be conducted by the California Department of Education (CDE). The evaluation will focus on student achievement and increases in enrollments in Algebra I. Grantees will be expected to report accurate measurements of improved achievement and enrollment increases to the local board, parents, teachers, students, and the CDE.

IV. APPLICATION COMPONENTS

The CRP application includes five components requiring completion of forms and narrative responses:

A. Establishing a Commitment
B. Needs Assessment and Goal Setting for the CRP
C. Development of the First Year Implementation Plan
D. Continuous Improvement of the CRP Effectiveness
E. Budget Summary and Justification

V. APPLICATION TIMELINE

The CRP application process consists of four stages:

1. The first step in the CRP process is sending or faxing a **Letter of Intent to Submit** to the Mathematics and Science Leadership Unit by January 12, 2001.
2. **Application** submissions by CRP lead LEA (on behalf of all CRP cluster schools) are due into the Mathematics and Science Leadership office by 5:00 p.m. on February 23, 2001.
3. The panel **review and scoring** of the submitted applications will be conducted in early March 2001.
4. Applicants **approved for funding** will be notified by mid March 2001.

Notification of grant awards will be made in writing to applicants and posted on the Internet at [www.cde.ca.gov] by mid March 2001. The CDE staff cannot respond to questions regarding the grant awards prior to that date. The first disbursement of funds will be released after the lead LEA submits the signed Certification of Acceptance of Grant Conditions and Drug-Free Workplace Certification forms.

VI. APPLICATION SUBMISSION PROCESS

1. ***Letter of Intent to Submit:*** The **Letter of Intent to Submit** is suggested for all clusters intending to complete an application. Only one Letter of Intent is **required from each CRP cluster**. Clusters submitting a Letter of Intent to Submit are under no obligation to submit an application. Applicants may send the letter to the address below or fax it to (916) 323-2833 by January 12, 2001.

2. ***Application Delivery:*** One (1) signed original and three (3) copies of the application must be **received** into the Mathematics and Science Leadership Unit **by 5:00 p.m., Friday, February 23, 2001.** All applications are required to follow the application format as described below. **Failure to adhere to the format requirements will cause the application to not be scored.** Incomplete or late applications will not be reviewed for funding. Applicants are urged to use express, certified, or registered mail. Transmission by electronic mail (modem) or facsimile (fax) will not be accepted. **Please mail applications to:**

Karen Martin, Office Technician
California Department of Education
Mathematics and Science Leadership Unit
830 S Street
Sacramento, CA 95814

Application Format Requirements:

- type written
- 1.5 line spacing
- 12 point type, using an easy-to-read font such as Arial, Gill Sans, Times New Roman, etc.
- Charts and graph may be singled space and use no smaller than 10 point type
- 1" side, top and bottom margins
- Footer on each page with the cluster's Lead LEA name, phone number and page number
- Do not attach additional pages or information not requested in the application
- Stapled, do not use binders or folders when submitting proposal

VII. SELECTION CRITERIA

Submitted applications will be reviewed by a panel according to the scoring guides. Panelists will be versed in current practices in mathematics professional development, *Mathematics Framework Standards for California Public Schools*, as well as the mathematics standards. Ratings will be compiled and the highest scoring proposals will be recommended for approval and funding. The following component scoring will be used by the selection panel:

Component	***Percent of score***
A. Establishing a commitment	5%
B. Needs Assessment and Goal Setting for the CRP	15%
C. Development of the First Year Implementation Plan	60%

D. Continuous Improvement of the CRP Effectiveness	15%
E. Budget Summary and Justification	5%

Grant Award Appeal Process:

A letter of appeal must be submitted within ten days of the notification of the awardees. Appeals shall be based on the grounds that the California Department of Education failed to correctly apply the standards for reviewing the application as specified in the request for applications. The letter of appeal must specify the issue(s) in dispute, the legal authority or basis for complaint, and the remedy sought. Incomplete or late appeals will not be considered. The California Department of Education will evaluate the applicant's appeal. All applicants who wish to appeal grant award decisions must submit their letter of appeal to:

William W. Vasey, Director
Professional Development and Curriculum Support Division
California Department of Education
830 S Street
Sacramento, CA 95814

VIII. QUESTIONS ABOUT THE RFA

For questions regarding the CRP application process, please contact Phil Lafontaine at (916) 323-4873 or plafonta@cde.ca.gov or Susan Iida at (916) 323-4694 or siida@cde.ca.gov.

IX. KEY IDEAS AND COMPONENTS OF THE CRP PROGRAM

Although there has been some recent improvement of schoolwide student performance on the Stanford Achievement Test 9 (SAT9) standardized tests, the goal set forth by the California mathematics standard of algebra for all eighth grade students still remains a challenge for middle schools (*Mathematics Framework for California Public Schools Grades Kindergarten through Twelve*, 1999, p. 2). The CRP grant initiative focuses on moving schools towards meeting the challenge of all eighth grade students achieving success in algebra. The following key ideas and components are designed to aid schools/district in the development of their CRP and application process.

A. Establishing a CRP Commitment and Partnership

There are no quick fixes for improving academic performance of all our students. CRP is intended to foster collaborative processes and programs determined to build an internal capacity necessary to strengthen the teaching of mathematics and thus improve student achievement. The challenges of assuring that all students are ready to succeed in algebra by eighth grade takes strong school and district leadership. All middle school teachers of mathematics and district/county administrators must be committed to the CRP plan and four year vision for academic excellence for all students in mathematics. Articulation with feeder elementary and high schools, as well as local colleges and universities, is encouraged as schools develop and seek solutions to the challenges they faced. Implementing the CRP is intended to establish a mission and program clearly focused on improving student learning.

B. Needs Assessment and Goal Setting for the CRP

Grant activities must focus on student achievement. All students deserve a high-quality mathematics program designed to prepare them to choose from a full range of career paths (*Mathematics Framework for California Public Schools, Kindergarten Through Grade Twelve*, 1999). An essential component of this grant is the examination of the existing mathematics program and student achievement in mathematics. Based on the data gathered, clear short and long term academic and programmatic goals will be established. All CRP schools will then design the first year implementation plan and activities necessary to attain these goals. This process should include representatives of the school community, including parents and community members, in the CRP cluster.

Based upon assessment of the current mathematics program and student achievement, a shared collaborative process involving representatives of the various stakeholder groups will determine the course of the CRP. A four year vision of the final results will enable schools to develop the first year goals, benchmarks, and action steps to attain progress towards meeting the vision. Schools will consider the program elements and target areas (e.g., instructional strategies, content knowledge, student support, instructional resources, assessment practices and policy, resources, and parent/community involvement) in designing their school's CRP.

Student/Parent Support

An important aspect of the vision should include parent and student support. Students must be encouraged by the teachers and counselors to take the more challenging courses to prepare them for advanced study. Tutoring and mentoring have proven to be highly effective support for students as they face the challenge of meeting the algebra standard. The CRP may work in concert with existing school/district after school or summer school tutorial programs. Students and their parents should receive information regarding preparing for college, both academically and financially. Applicants are encouraged to connect with existing efforts in their areas such as Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID), and Mathematics, Engineering and Science Advancement (MESA).

Teacher Support/Professional Development

Another aspect to consider as the CRP vision is developed is the role of a comprehensive and coherent professional development program. According to the findings of the Glenn Commission, the most direct route to improving mathematics and science achievement for all students is better mathematics and science teaching (*Before It's Too Late,* 2000). Therefore, all mathematics teachers need to be fully prepared to provide the students with a rigorous instructional program designed to facilitate and enhance student understanding of the subject matter. To this end, teachers in mathematics must be well prepared in the areas of mathematics content knowledge, instructional practices, and materials necessary to facilitate the students' understanding and mastery of the subject. The professional development program of the CRP must address teachers' needs and provide a basis for systemic change for the school. The professional development program should include aspects of continuous improvement such as data gathering and analysis, reflection on the effectiveness of current instructional strategies, curriculum development, and content knowledge. Applicants must collaborate with their local CSU and are encouraged to link with the Algebra Professional Development Institutes for

teachers, as well as with professional development organizations e.g. Math Renaissance, Math Matters, California Mathematics Project, and K-12 Alliance for Mathematics and Science.

Mathematics Coach

As the CRP cluster develops their vision, a key person will be the mathematics coach. The mathematics coach will guide the data collection and self evaluation. The CRP grant initiative focuses on mastery of the mathematics standard described in the *Mathematics Framework for California Public Schools, Kindergarten through Grade Twelv*e, 1999. The framework calls for students to achieve success in an Algebra I course in grade eight. Various aspects of the school program must be addressed to achieve this goal and include, but are not limited to:

- Curriculum design
- Instructional strategies
- Classroom practices
- Organizational structure of the school
- Policies and procedures

The process for change addresses:

- assessing individual student knowledge
- analyzing student achievement and assessment
- setting priorities to achieve the desired benchmarks
- tracking results of the CRP

Each CRP is required to select a mathematics coach whose primary responsibility is to both the cluster teachers and the CRP continuous improvement process. The mathematics coach will facilitate the examination of the program. A variety of professional development strategies for teachers and support systems for students should be used to accomplish the desired program changes. These strategies may include: immersion into mathematics, curriculum development and adaptation, examining practice, collaborative work including study groups, coaching, and mentoring, seminars, institutes (*Designing Professional Development in Mathematics and Science*, Loucks-Horsley, et.al., 1998).

C. Development of the First Year Implementation Plan

Based upon the four year vision and first year goals, an implementation plan for the first year, complete with anticipated action activities and a timeline, should be established. All anticipated activities and events should consider and address the existing conditions and needs of the CRP schools.

D. Continuous Improvement of the CRP Effectiveness

The CRP relies on program evaluation based on student achievement. Schools must use a variety of means to assess student progress and to communicate the assessment results to teachers, parents, students, and other partners. With the guidance of the mathematics coach, each of the cluster schools must review assessment instruments such as SAT 9, the Golden State Exam, district-level assessments, classroom assessments and other instruments which will help them to measure student mastery of the grade eight Algebra I standards. Evaluations of the professional

development program must also be considered. Based upon the results of the evaluation data, the CRP Cluster, along with the stakeholders, will determine the necessary steps and second year benchmarks to continue progress towards the four year vision.

E. Budget Summary and Justification

The CRP budget expenditures must be directly linked to the four year vision and first year implementation plan. At least eighty-five percent of the CRP funds must be spent for providing (1) teacher professional development in mathematics content and pedagogy, (2) the ongoing support of a mathematics coach both inside and outside of the classroom, and (3) additional teacher time for discussion centered around student achievement and assessment.

X. CRP APPLICATION CONTENTS AND INSTRUCTIONS

The CRP grants are offered to clusters of eligible schools to facilitate the development and implementation of the College Readiness Program. In completing your application, please provide information and/or preliminary data to support your application. Assume the readers are not familiar with your school, community, or local acronyms. The application of the CRP contains many parts and requires careful attention to the recording mechanism. Parts of the application information are requested in narrative information while other parts are requested on established templates. Presenting data in graphic and chart type form is acceptable where applicable. These templates and forms are listed in the outline of the application. Please note: some information and forms will be submitted in reference to the Cluster as a whole, while other information and forms will be submitted in reference to the individual schools. **(See Appendix A, Page 13)**

A. Establishing a Commitment and Partnerships (Weighted 5%)

- **FORM A1—Commitment Signature Page:** Be sure all parties have signed and understand their commitment to the CRP.
- **FORM A2—School Site Staff:** Be sure all participating teachers and principals have signed and understand their commitment to the CRP. The Application must contain a Form A2 from each school.
- **Cluster Narrative:** In a one page narrative, describe the articulation and collaborations you anticipate. Who is involved? Why? How will your collaborations function, including areas of policy, operational decision-making? What are the roles of the collaborating members, including school principals and staff, county agencies, feeder elementary and high schools, CSU, parents and community.

B. Needs Assessment and Goal Setting for the CRP (Weighted 15%)

- **School/District(s) Information Narrative:** Describe the profile of each school in the cluster. Include information on the demographics and district information for each school participating in the CRP cluster. Describe the base line data for each cluster school pertaining to student enrollment and achievement. How were the data derived? What were the tools for measurement? Describe the current mathematics program for each CRP school. What instructional strategies are used? What instructional materials are being used? Please provide a brief description of the background of the participating

teachers. What professional development activities, training or professional development networks focused on mathematics has each cluster school been involved with? How will the CRP build upon the existing professional development plans for each cluster school? Have the past professional development plans focused on all teachers of mathematics in grades six, seven, and eight?

- **Four year vision: FORM B—CRP Vision Document:** Record the existing conditions of the schools in the first column. Describe the four year vision and the basis for the vision statements in the last column. Include the data that were expressly used to determine the vision. Remember that the vision statements must have measurable benchmarks for student achievement, enrollment totals and successful completion of the eighth grade Algebra I course. Based upon the four year vision, determine the first year goals and benchmarks and record in the middle column. Be sure to include and define the measurable benchmarks in the four year vision statements. Please refer to Scoring Guide for a description of each programs element.

C. Development of the First Year Implementation Plan (Weighted 60%)

- **FORM C — CRP Implementation Plan:** Define the first year anticipated actions steps based upon the existing conditions from FORM B, the first year goals, and the four year vision for each of the following eight target areas*:
  - ⇒ Teacher Support - Content Knowledge
  - ⇒ Teacher Support - Instructional Strategies
  - ⇒ Teacher Support - Classroom Practices
  - ⇒ Student Support - Academic Achievement
  - ⇒ Student Support - Support Services
  - ⇒ School/District Policies and Practices
  - ⇒ Instructional Resources
  - ⇒ Parent/Community Involvement

* Be sure to transfer the existing conditions from FORM B to FORM C.

Note: Template may be duplicated to record the information per target area.

D. Continuous Improvement of the CRP Effectiveness (Weighted 15%)

Effectiveness Narratives:

- Describe the anticipated process for evaluating the effectiveness of the CRP in the various schools as well as the cluster as a whole. What will be the multiple measures of student success? How will the results be reported to the students, parents, school boards, etc?
- Describe the anticipated process for revision. How will all stakeholders collaboratively review the student progress and determine the adjustments that may be needed?

Note: No form is provided for this section.

E. Budget Summary and Justification (Weighted 5%)

- **FORM E—CRP Proposed Budget Summary for Year 1:** Please provide a budget summary of the anticipated expenditures of the CRP. (Please note that the Budget Summary is necessary from the lead LEA only and not necessary from each CRP cluster school.) Please attach a justification for all expenditures per object code and supplemental funding used for the operation of the CRP.

- Grant funds, up to $40,000 for each participating school, are available for up to four years. Funding for years subsequent to Year 1 will be contingent on future state budget allocations Continued funding of the individual CRP clusters will depend upon making significant progress in algebra enrollments and submitting the required program and fiscal reports. At least eighty-five percent of the CRP funds must be spent for providing (1) teacher professional development in mathematics content and pedagogy, (2) the ongoing support of a mathematics coach both inside and outside of the classroom, and (3) additional teacher time for discussion centered around student achievement and assessment.

NOTES AND RESTRICTIONS:

- This budget should reflect the proposed combined expenditures for all the schools in the CRP cluster.

- Year 1 of this grant period is from March 1, 2001 – February 28, 2002.

- Expenditures for "4000-4999 Books and Supplies" are not to exceed five percent of the total cluster budget and are to be expressly used in the professional development program and not for enhancement of student instructional programs.

- Indirect costs may not exceed the approved rate for the 2000-01 fiscal year. Calculation: Total series 1000-6000 x Indirect Cost Rate = Indirect Cost. Add to the subtotal to compute the Total.

- Object Code 7000-7299 (Tuition and Other Transfers Out)
  The following additional Budget Information must be submitted on behalf of the Cluster Lead LEA if the Cluster Lead will transfer funds to another district:
  - Transfer of pass-through revenues to districts: $_____.

- Please remember when preparing your budget, any budget line item change of more than ten percent will require prior approval by the CDE.